Third station in Antarctica

427. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's third station in Antarctica with the state-of-the-art and world class facilities would be ready by 2008;

(b) if so, the location of the third station and the details of how it proposes to function; and

(c) the details of work done by the previous two stations in Antarctica?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, a site near latitude 69° South and longitude 76° East has been identified for setting up of third Indian Antarctic Station. Preliminary surveys on environmental parameters as mandated under the Environmental Protocol of the Antarctic Treaty and also from logistics and scientific considerations, have been carried out during the last two summer expeditions. Further studies and surveys are being planned to develop a detailed plan proposal for getting necessary clearances as per the Protocol for the new station.

(c) The 'Dakshin Gangotri' station, which was established in the Antarctic summer of 1983/1984 outlived its life by 1988 and the present research station' 'Maitri' was made operational in 1989. Since 1981 research work is being carried out in the fields of Atmospheric Science, Biology and Human Physiology, Environmental Sciences, Earth Sciences and Glaciology, Global Climate Change and Engineering and Communication.

At Maitri, eight permanent observatories have been established, which are providing continuous data on weather, geomagnetism, seismicity, plate movement, Very Low Frequency propagation, communication, environmental and cold acclimatization.

So far 24 expeditions have gone to Antarctica in which more than 700 scientists, belonging to over 50 national level institutes and organizations have participated. A vast array of scientific and technological information has been collected in addition to publication of sixteen technical reports, several books, map and one atlas on Antarctic sea ice and more than 300 scientific papers. About 45 Ph.Ds have been awarded on the research work carried out in Antarctica.